

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 AGRE-00 CIAE-00 COME-00
INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SP-02 STR-07 TRSE-00 FRB-03
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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1590
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

CONFIDENTIAL HONG KONG 9137

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ETRD, HK
SUBJECT: NON-RUBBER FOOTWEAR - HONG KONG

REF: A) STATE 170268, B) USDOC 11861

1. CONGEN HAS OBTAINED COPY OF ARTICLE CITED REFTELS FROM AUTHOR DUSTY KEDD THE FAIRCHILD NEWS SERVICE HONG KONG CORRESPONDENT. KIDD KNOWN TO POST AND IS REGARDED AS RELIABLE AND PERCEPTIVE BUSINESS REPORTER. HE SAID THAT WHILE HE NAMED ONLY ONE INDUSTRY SOURCE IN HIS ARTICLE, HIS COMMENTS WERE DRAWN FROM CONVERSATION WITH ABOUT TEN HONG KONG FOOTWEAR MANUFACTURERS ALL OF WHOM REPORTED NUMEROUS INCIDENTS OF TAIWAN FOOTWEAR COMPONENTS BEING ASSEMBLED IN HONG KONG FOR EXPORT TO US. KIDD'S SOURCES INDICATED THE TRADE WAS CONCENTRATED IN LOW-UNIT VALUE RUBBER, PLASTIC OR FABRIC FOOTWEAR ITEMS, MANY OR MOST OF WHICH ARE IN TSUSA CATEGORIES COVERED BY TAIWAN OMA.

2. THE HONG KONG EXPORT STATISTICS QUOTED IN KIDD ARTICLE ARE ACCURATE AND SHOULD RECONCILE WITH THE HONG KONG TRADE STATISTICS POUCHED MONTHLY TO CERP ADDRESSES AND GENERALLY WITH THE CONGEN TABULATION HANDCARRIED TO CONFIDENTIAL

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WASHINGTON BY MIKE SMITH IN EARLY JUNE (HONG KONG 7175). VIEW EXPRESSED IN ARTICLE THAT HONG KONG INDUSTRY ITSELF COULD NOT GENERATE SUCH INCREASES IS PROBABLY VALID BUT IS DIFFICULT TO CONFIRM AS THERE ARE NO SEPARATE ESTABLISHMENT OR EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS FOR PLASTIC FOOTWEAR. LEATHER AND RUBBER FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY WHILE OLD IS COMPOSED OF SMALL FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS THAT HAVE BEEN STEADY BUT RELATIVELY

SMALL EXPORT EARNERS EMPLOYING IN TOTAL AROUND ONE PERCENT
OF THE INDUSTRIAL LABOR FORCE.

3. KIDD ARTICLE ALSO CORRECT WITH RESPECT TO HKG IMPORT
STATISTICS I.E. THAT THERE ARE NO SEPARATE IMPORT STATISTICS
FOR FOOTWEAR COMPONENTS AND THEREFORE IT DIFFICULT TO
ASCERTAIN VALUE OR VOLUME OF TAIWAN/KOREA ORIGIN COMPONENTS
THAT MAY BE COMING IN FOR LABELLING AND/OR ASSEMBLY FOR ONWARD
SHIPMENT TO U.S. HOWEVER, WE RECALL HKG TICD COMMENT (HONG KONG
7171) THAT RANDOM CONSIGNMENT CHECKS HAD REVEALED SOME FOOTWEAR
COMPONENT IMPORT SHIPMENTS OF TAIWAN OR KOREA ORIGIN BUT THAT
SAMPLINGS DID NOT PERMIT CONCLUSIONS ON POSSIBLE TOTAL VOLUME.

4. POST WILL CONTINUE TO PROD TICD FOR HARD IMPORT DATA
PER REFTEL (A) AND TO MONITOR FOOTWEAR EMPLOYMENT
STATISTICS. WE ALSO WATCHING FOR ANY DISCERNIBLE TRENDS
IN SHOE MACHINERY IMPORTS. WILL CABLE ANY SIGNIFICANT
DATA AS WE COLLECT IT, INCLUDING ANY ADDITIONAL
READINGS FROM LOCAL BUSINESS SOURCES. WOULD APPRECIATE
ANY RELEVANT STATISTICS (EXPORTS TO HONG KONG) AND
PERTINENT INFORMATION THAT EMBASSIES TAIPEI AND SEOUL
CAN FURNISH.
SHOESMITH

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